



Department of Health and Human Services/Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Global AIDS Program (GAP)

Under the direction of the U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator's Office, the HHS/CDC Global AIDS Program (GAP) is a proud partner in the unified U.S. Government effort to implement the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief. GAP helps resource-constrained countries prevent HIV infection; improve treatment, care, and support for people living with HIV; and build capacity and infrastructure to address the global HIV/AIDS pandemic.

About Our Work: Behavior Change Communications

Behavior change has been an important strategy for combating HIV since the beginning of the epidemic. Encouraging behavior change is often complicated by a lack of services, widespread poverty, discrimination against persons who have HIV, and cultural norms.

The best methods for behavior change interventions are personalized, emotionally compelling, use positive role models, demonstrate sensitivity to social and cultural norms and expectations, and recognize the unique barriers to change in the local environment.

MARCH: Modeling and Reinforcement to Combat HIV is a U.S. Government behavior change strategy developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The **MARCH** strategy combines individual behavior change with efforts to change social norms through entertainment as a vehicle for education using broadcast media, and community outreach efforts to reinforce messages.

Long-running serialized dramas have been effective in portraying believable role models and have led to the adoption of positive behaviors which reduce the risk of HIV infection. Interpersonal reinforcement and support from friends, family members, and others help individuals initiate behavior changes, link people to resources in the community, and support the changes in social norms necessary to sustain behavior change over time.

In Botswana, MARCH . .

- ◆ Works with local partners and consultants to produce a popular radio serial drama focusing on culturally specific, AIDS-related issues. The program, **Makgabaneng**, began airing in August 2001 and will continue through 2005.
- ◆ Supports the establishment of **Makgabaneng** as a local entity that will continue to develop and implement HIV prevention entertainment-education programs.
- ◆ Assists local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), schools and faith-based partners to train discussion group facilitators who work in communities across Botswana.

In Zimbabwe, MARCH . .

- ◆ Works with the Media for Development Trust to produce the radio serial drama, **Mopani Junction**, focusing on HIV/AIDS issues. The 104-episode drama is written and produced in three languages.
- ◆ Trains scriptwriters and provides ongoing consultation on creating characters and storylines that are both empirically and theoretically sound.
- ◆ Helps faith-based and civic organizations conduct **Mopani Junction** listening discussion groups.

Radio drama makes impact on listeners

Two separate 15-minute episodes of Botswana's radio drama, **Makgabaneng**, meaning "Rocky Road," air twice weekly on two national broadcast stations. The characters provide models for behavior, and the storylines reflect the culture and the support services of the local environment.

The **Makgabaneng** project includes listening discussion groups and road shows to reinforce HIV prevention behaviors and encourage listenership in the community.

A 2003 survey found that 45% of Botswanas report listening to the program one or more times every week.

Weekly listeners of the radio drama demonstrated greater knowledge about key HIV issues and less stigmatizing attitudes.

For example, weekly listeners were:

- ◆ more likely (82.8%) to recognize that prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) is possible than other respondents (66%);
- ◆ more likely (96%) to say they would allow a HIV-positive relative to live in their household than other respondents (87.4%).

Last Updated January 2005

HHS/CDC GAP: A proud partner in the unified U.S Government effort to implement the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief.

